



BCTDA 2018-2019 SALES & MARKETING PLAN

Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau
27 College Place, Asheville | ExploreAsheville.com

Explore **ASHEVILLE**

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MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

2018-2019 OBJECTIVES

KEY OBJECTIVE

Expand the presence of Destination Asheville in the national conversation and increase aspirational desire along with demand.

- Drive **4.3 million** visits to ExploreAsheville.com
- Exceed **4 billion** earned media impressions
- Generate **at least one million** video views of Explore Asheville CVB videos

The marketing team and its agency-of-record develop strategies to expand awareness and understanding of the Asheville area destination brand, create desire for visitor experiences and drive demand for overnight lodging. Using data-driven insights, the team shapes creative messaging and determines the most effective distribution channels for paid media, while complementing that with integrated proactive media relations efforts, content development strategies, niche promotions and a social outreach program to further amplify destination buzz.

ASHEVILLE'S BRAND PROMISE | We guarantee you a life-enriching experience each and every time you visit Asheville. It's personal, personal to you. And it is also personal to us. We live that same genuine experience and want to share it with you. We empower you to discover a collection of experiences that is as unique and varied as each individual who visits us, and allow you to do so in a warm, embracing and creative environment.

BRAND POSITION | The unique and eclectic array of experiences in Asheville opens wide your sense of discovery and enriches your life.

CORE VALUES | Welcoming. Natural. Vibrant.

PAID MEDIA

Core Segment

Adults 45+
Median HHI: \$100K+
Highly Educated
Empty Nesters

Family Segment

Adults 25-54
Median HHI: \$100K+
Suburban Settlers
Children in HH

Millennial Segment

Adults 25-34
Median HHI: \$50K
Urban Dwellers
Young Singles

Retiree Segment

Adults 65+
Media HHI: \$50K
Stable Lifestyles
Retired Couples

PRIMARY AUDIENCE | Elite Empty Nesters: Prosperous, established empty nesting couples living sophisticated lifestyles with a taste for the finer things in life; embrace new and exciting cultural experiences; enjoy trying different types of food; very interested in the fine arts; active in philanthropic and charitable ventures; want to explore and learn new things; relish the opportunity to travel far and wide; frequently travel to both domestic and foreign destinations.

SECONDARY AUDIENCE

- Secondary Buxton Segment Groups
 - Power families: mobile, child-centered families indulging in travel and entertainment
 - Experiential Millennials: cutting-edge and unattached, constantly mobile and always striving for more out of life
 - Bargain-Savvy Retirees: taking advantage of free time to travel and pick up new hobbies after a lifetime of labor
- Engages Couples: Individuals interested in a destination wedding and/or honeymoon
- Meeting Planners: Coordinators of overnight group functions and events

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

- Core DMAs: Atlanta, Charlotte, Greensboro-Winston-Salem-High Point, Raleigh-Durham
- Regional + High Familiarity DMAs: Knoxville, Columbia, Charleston, Greenville
- Expansion DMAs: Nashville, Cincinnati, Washington D.C. region, Florida markets (Jacksonville, Orlando, Tampa, West Palm Beach, Miami)
- Expand to national audience as opportunities and efficiencies are identified

STRATEGIES & TACTICS

Increase destination awareness by expanding paid advertising reach and extend familiarity beyond the Southeast.

- Use available research and market demand insights to refine a comprehensive plan to optimize further market expansion.
- Increase national presence by building in opportunities for national print, digital and broadcast.
- Evaluate top Buxton segments within each market, identifying common patterns and difference within and across markets to apply to messaging and media efforts
- Focus broadcast and video streaming in core DMAs and designated opportunity markets while layering in other advertising tactical efforts through integrated partnerships to provide additional weight in designated markets.

Expand assets and build on positioning with execution of integrated brand messaging that provides crossover opportunities that includes paid and earned media channels.

- Lead with video assets as often as possible due to its increased storytelling potential.
- Use vibrant, engaging photography in print and digital that works to tell a story and appeals to that specific market.
- Align timing and messaging of paid media, search engine marketing and social activities.
- Direct call-to-action to custom landing pages on ExploreAsheville.com to be integrated wherever possible.

Continue to leverage video assets that deliver inspirational imagery and storytelling to create emotional connections and increase aspirational desire among travelers through the channels best suited for reaching the target.

- Use market penetration data intelligence to determine efficiencies for effective video delivery via traditional broadcast, addressable TV, broadcast partnerships and other opportunities.
- Integrate video assets into rich media ads to maximize views and increase click-throughs to ExploreAsheville.com.
- Refresh video assets in order to tailor online video to individual markets and Buxton segments based on the particular insights and interests of each.

Evolve digital strategy in response to the dynamic and ever-changing ecosystem.

- Further refine and optimize digital messaging and delivery using data science and analytical tools to tweak performance and goal conversion that deliver on KPIs.
- Enhance retargeting efforts by leveraging behavioral data and activity on site to deliver more customized, dynamic messaging to our target – advertising that serves up the right message to the right person at the right time.
- Use retargeting to create year-round continuity of messaging in the marketplace.
- Continue to utilize paid social advertising, leveraging its extensive audience and targeting capabilities, and showcasing the destination through high-impact creative.
- Test innovative new vendor products.

Continue to develop paid content and editorial partnerships that leverage established brands and influencers to help tell and amplify the Asheville story.

- Work with media companies to establish unique and expansive content opportunities that span an array of marketing channels.
- Specifically identify video and broadcast sponsored content opportunities that can be further amplified through a paired approach in digital and social channels.
- Continue to incorporate paid influencers into the media marketing mix while leveraging the story knowledge of Explore Asheville's public relations team to guide and help craft the itineraries and experiences that will shape the paid content.
- Identify and execute on advertising partnerships with brand-aligned organizations or businesses.

Schedule advertising to create year-round presence that addresses the unique selling proposition and positioning associated with each season.

- Continue paid advertising into the holiday season in an effort to convert day trips to Asheville area holiday events to overnight visits.
- Introduce a seasonal Fall campaign to drive overnight demand and maintain pace with the increase in supply.
- Evaluate media fluidly to determine investment based on anticipated bookings per season.
- Use existing assets and messaging that align with digital promotions aimed at specific geographic market groups that align with the interests of their Buxton segments.
- Create compelling native advertising that appeals to niche audiences and has potential for viral share. Promote these placements to low awareness markets to generate more awareness of Asheville.

Entice potential visitors actively searching for information about vacation activities or destination attributes that align with the Asheville area experiences and offerings to put the Asheville area in the consideration set and drive them to book.

- Use pay-per-click (PPC) program to target specific keyword sets.
- Use A/B testing of messaging to optimize and maximize response to specific keyword campaigns.
- Layer in display banners that are hyper-targeted to travel intenders, identified based on recent and current travel content consumption and search behaviors.

Consistently apply data intelligence and market research to optimize messaging and delivery and understand consumer behavior as it pertains to destination travel.

- Evaluate existing tools with AOR.
- Integrate Buxton persona and market composition data to create market-by-market strategic approach.
- Continue to deploy Arrivalist technology to understand how paid and owned media influence in-market visitation.
- Use travel intelligence to shift messaging, delivery vehicles and market as needed, to maximize efficiencies in reaching target audience.
- Use research to test creative messages, as needed.

MARKET-BY-MARKET STRATEGY

Using Buxton segmentation data as a foundation, create a market-by-market strategic approach that heavily influences messaging and media efforts.

- Identify the top Buxton segments that drive each market, finding common patterns and key differences among these audiences.
- Package our key market assets and position those against corresponding motivations and interests across audience segments.

- Create a foundational brand message for core audience across the board and focus on each market's unique composition to dictate secondary audiences and messaging approaches.
- Ladder up and balance tactics across all markets and segment groups through the lens of the brand position.
- Leverage other data sources and market research to bolster market-by-market strategy, taking into particular consideration awareness levels, market insights, historic investment and the competitive landscape.

NICHE MARKETING STRATEGIES

Continue to showcase the vibrancy, variety and depth of Asheville's cultural and natural attributes (specifically in the areas of arts, music, culinary and outdoors) through expanded content and microsites, destination storytelling and integrated marketing efforts aimed at growing awareness and illuminating/facilitating the visitor experience.

- Further grow credibility and awareness for the Asheville area food scene by leveraging content in expanded web platforms and ongoing marketing and media relations efforts.
- Continue to showcase the arts through paid media efforts, social and Web content and through specific partnerships (such as the Summer of Glass effort).
- Execute on phase III of the music initiative, promoting the curated playlists on ExploreAsheville.com and using music assets in content pages and social media campaigns.
- With the understanding that mountains continue to be a travel motivator, continue to leverage dynamic outdoor content (i.e. hiking trails, highest peaks, national parks, Blue Ridge Parkway and other signature natural adventures) that shows potential visitors and committed Asheville travelers the connection and accessibility points of the area's distinctive natural offerings.
- Develop new visual and written content to highlight the distinguishing elements of Buncombe County's small towns and neighborhood districts, to inspire visitor exploration, promote extended stays, connect visitors with authentic, highly local experiences.
- Develop content that meets consumer expectations upon click-through with the aim of increasing time-on-site and more effectively funneling behavior flow to improve conversion goals.

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT & ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

Develop and curate world class content: Continue to embrace the idea of storytelling and maintain a dynamic, diverse and deep content library to generate affinity for the destination, highlight distinctive brand attributes and evoke an emotional connection with the consumer.

- Draw on data from Google Analytics and the expertise of analysts and local partners to determine editorial coverage based on consumer interest, news value and search trends. Continue to work with local freelance contributors to develop strategic written and visual content with destination authority.
- Implement a strategy to procure, create and integrate more high-quality visual content (video, live broadcast, Instagram Stories, infographics, quizzes, 360-degree photo and video tours, user-generated content) that has high potential for shareability and engagement across CVB web and social media.
- Utilize Crowdriff technologies to source, curate and display user-generated content in the form of photographs or videos to provide visitors with an authentic view inside the destination.
- Research and develop 360-degree photo and video assets and an interactive viewer to allow visitors to browse the destination while planning their visit.
- Participate in the Google DMO Partnership Program to enhance the CVB's role in Google's growing ecosystem of travel products, to optimize the experience of the travel planner, and to place destination content in front of more web searchers.

Optimize the online experience for visitors to ExploreAsheville.com and followers to associated social media channels to provide information according to individual needs and interests.

- Analyze findings and implement technical and content recommendations from Simpleview's SEO Analyst to improve organic performance of ExploreAsheville.com.
- Employ search optimization best practices and findings from Google Analytics, Search Console and AdWords into development of new content pages and in updates to existing and seasonal content.
- Use Bound 360 personalization technology to customize user experience based on geography, search terms, advertising activity and consumer behavior.
- Engage and retain web users with content that balances detailed, practical destination insight/resources with more aspirational destination context, incorporating dynamic functionality and high-impact visuals to inspire and improve online consumer planning as well as grow CVB understanding of key areas of travel interest.
- Develop custom landing pages as a fulfillment mechanism for digital campaigns to increase time-on-site and encourage specific actions that lead to booking and other conversion goals.
- Conduct a web usability study on ExploreAsheville.com to develop a better understanding of how users want to navigate the site and evaluate the usability of various page layouts and site elements.
- Develop a strategic plan and implementation of changes as part of a site refresh of ExploreAsheville.com that is informed by CRO research and the web usability study and leads to improvements in web KPIs and conversion.
- Develop an Asheville Experiences bookable ticketing microsite and/or native app.

- Improve conversion rates for lower funnel conversion metrics through split testing analysis based on recommendations from Simpleview's Conversion Rate Optimization team.
- Use booking engine to drive consumers deeper into the planning funnel with the aim of closing the sale.
- Leverage the ExploreAsheville.com to serve as main point of fulfillment and motivate actual and aspirational visitation, promote saving and sharing content, and encourage additional exploration and vacation bookings.
- Drive advertising and social communications to ExploreAsheville.com content and landing pages and measure specific click-through actions.
- Drive online bookings and downstream traffic to partners, including those signed on to Simpleview's Destination Travel Network (DTN), a turn-key solution for implementation of an attractive advertising program.
- Capitalize on Asheville's awe-inspiring scenic assets, cultural connectivity and philosophy of self-expression to provide more expansive and deeper awareness of destination assets, while creating emotional connections with potential and repeat visitors, destination fans and enthusiasts.
- Utilize Explore Asheville's inspirational videos to showcase the destination and create additional video assets for a variety of marketing uses.
- Continue to contract locally for production of complementary video shorts that build our multimedia library, expand our YouTube channel, and provides assets for digital and native advertising.
- Create and procure still photography that can be used across marketing channels, promotions and media outreach.
- Provide additional information to consumers who have responded to advertising or requested additional information about the Asheville area.
- Work with Saga City to produce the Official Asheville Travel Guide that can be used by potential visitors and travelers on the ground to learn about the destination and plan their visits.
- Ensure flexibility and device compatibility by providing online and iPad versions of the Travel Guide.

Use key social media channels to drive awareness and create engagement with traveling consumers. Make CVB social channels work harder and smarter through content optimization and audience targeting.

- Utilize Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to keep Asheville top-of-mind for online fans; extending reach with buzzworthy aspirational content, shareable multimedia assets, timely news items, strategic post promotion/advertising and special giveaways to engage fans and drive traffic to ExploreAsheville.com.
- Use a combination of social media channels and tools to complement specific/niche promotions, expand the reach of marketing messages and amplify coverage by media and influencers.

- Continue to leverage YouTube, Vimeo, Facebook and Instagram as video distribution platforms for Explore Asheville's extensive video content program, including Facebook Live broadcast opportunities and curated Instagram Story coverage to showcase Asheville's unique destination attributes.
- Evaluate other emerging social tools and technologies to further expand the Asheville brand.
- Incorporate keyword strategy in social messaging to assist in driving traffic to website.
- Further amplify the reach of social content through mobilization of industry partners, business stakeholders, brand enthusiasts and proud community ambassadors (i.e. Movoto) willing to link to ExploreAsheville.com or share CVB social and multimedia messages/assets through their channels.
- Employ best practices to optimize the Explore Asheville YouTube channel to grow views of owned content through organic search and shares.

Continue an online outreach program that leverages e-mail newsletters and viral marketing opportunities, utilizing a customer-focused approach.

- Explore opportunities offered by the new MailChimp email platform to build the e-newsletter subscriber database, grow click-through and open rates and engage new subscribers.
- Develop a re-engagement strategy for the redesigned Asheville Traveler e-newsletter, evaluating and recommending opportunities including segmented outreach to self-identified niche interest groups (arts, outdoors, culture and food) and new/prospective travelers, as well as a plan for content, asset and social integration.

MEDIA RELATIONS

Continue a proactive media relations program with an emphasis on relationship building and on-brand, news-ready outreach to generate earned media in strategically targeted outlets and ensure key messages are conveyed in editorial, broadcast and online placements.

- Create customized pitches aimed at editors, journalists, bloggers, influencers and video/rich media producers. Identify and respond to pitch opportunities generated through outside sources.
- Cultivate new and existing media relationships through meaningful one-on-one connections including media tours, targeted pitches, networking events, story support and site visit facilitation.
- Encourage journalists on assignment to expand and infuse stories with brand messages, as well as seasonal and niche story ideas. Promote inclusion of call-to-action conversion-oriented elements including ExploreAsheville.com resources, multimedia assets, travel packages, events and online booking.
- Continue to evolve pitch and press release tactics to provide media contacts the news and destination insight that is most relevant to their coverage.

- Update the online news room and press kit collateral to meet changing needs of journalists on assignment, including photo/video asset management and streamlined media vetting and response.
- Optimize and fully leverage destination news and messaging strategies through integration and alignment with ExploreAsheville.com editorial content. Continue to repurpose ExploreAsheville.com news, pitches and editorials across audiences—including media—to maximize message reach, boost awareness and create synergy among CVB communications platforms and media outreach initiatives.
- Refine best practices for deployment and integration of destination news content that will strategically boost SEO/keyword share, backlinks and positively impact ExploreAsheville.com's online and social authority.
- Leverage social media as an integrated tool for media relations, targeted pitching, news distribution and media reciprocity, by sharing stories and tagging journalists through CVB media channels.

Use media tours and site visits to elevate personal connections with media and increase dialogue and Explore Asheville influence on stories, while also seeking opportunities to secure on-the-spot broadcast coverage.

Conduct media tours that leverage a diversity of media and publicity opportunities, including deskside visits, broadcast interviews, sponsored/hosted activities and destination showcases.

Additionally, maintain an industry conference presence targeting events that focus on media networking and marketplace opportunities.

Schedule:

- Regional Mission: Charlotte (summer)
- Charleston to Atlanta (fall)
- SATW Media Marketplace (fall)
- Chattanooga, Knoxville, Tri-Cities (winter)
- Ohio Valley Cities: Cincinnati, Dayton, Columbus, Indianapolis (winter)
- Toronto-Montreal (winter)
- Greenville, SC (spring)
- New York City (spring)
- Regional Mission: Atlanta or DC (spring)
- PRSA 2017 Conference (spring)

Maximize perennial media and consumer interest in season-specific travel through well-timed, integrated media and content/social marketing campaigns.

- Leverage the popular fall foliage season to maximize national and drive market exposure through an integrated marketing effort of strategically placed/secured fall predictions, destination news, call-to-travel elements and aspirational multimedia

elements (e.g. Fall 360 interactive color update, Facebook Live interviews, dynamic web content and stunning photography/video).

- Generate interest in Asheville as a winter travel destination by elevating its differentiating winter travel experiences as a cozy mountain getaway with a blend of rich cultural offerings and outdoor adventure with long-range views.
- During typically softer winter months, hone-in on broadcast and news opportunities in key drive markets to boost awareness of seasonal offerings, specifically those tied to culinary, romance, performing arts and time-sensitive event news (e.g. Asheville Restaurant Week, major Biltmore exhibit news, SoCon, travel packages).
- Identify and help facilitate development of newsworthy, seasonal travel packages to feed integrated marketing efforts with fresh, season-specific news and on-brand curated experiences.

Target emerging and existing niche markets, especially music, arts, culinary, outdoor, and meetings and convention business, while maintaining emphasis on primary travel motivators.

- Continue to expand and leverage music niche assets to generate media interest, including continuation of a media strategy and outreach plan to connect with journalists/influencers to increase awareness of this destination attribute.
- Execute destination immersion site visits for music media and influencers with special focus on establishing new connections within the music media genre.
- Update and develop media materials and pitch ideas for specific content areas to generate media placements.

Engage top-tier digital influencers as paid brand ambassadors to strategically place destination messages with their niche audiences.

- Execute immersive destination experiences for brand ambassadors that will provide content inspiration for their channels that is authentic, engaging and inspiring.
- Create deliverables for paid influencers that specifically tie coverage plans to Explore Asheville PR, content and web/SEO goals, including strategic messaging, web backlinks and image/video asset catalog development.
- Work with the Explore Asheville content team to continue to execute a coverage optimization plan for paid influencers that maximizes exposure of content deliverables. Tactics may include editorial rollout plans, Instagram takeovers, video teasers, social promotion/engagement from EA channels and/or supporting content on Explore Asheville channels.

Use insights and measurement tools to identify PR opportunities, gauge effectiveness of specific media relations efforts and make adjustments as needed.

- Continue to track effectiveness and ROI of media relations efforts by employing news/clips services, tracking media touchpoints and site visits, logging proactive pitches, monitoring release performance and assessment of online, print and broadcast placements.

- Use TrendKite and Google Analytics measure traffic and social engagement generated by media placements, influencer content and online stories.
- Develop and deploy strategies to leverage TrendKite media coverage insights that may include high-impact outlet targeting, promotion of trending or high-SEO stories, media influencer outreach, keyword-based pitching, competitor coverage analysis and optimization or promotion of backlinked content.

GROUP SALES & SERVICE

HIGHLIGHT METRICS

	Sales Leads Issued	Definite Rooms Booked	Estimated Revenue Generated	Familiarization Tour Participation	Independent Site Visits
FY 17-18	797	82,415	\$18,222,574	65	74
FY 16-17	787	74,497	\$17,590,801	60	49
FY 15-16	781	64,965	\$13,999,491	45	59

2018-2019 OBJECTIVES

- Book **80,000** definite room nights
- Secure **800** group leads

GROUP SALES OUTLOOK

The Group Sales & Services team develop strategies and tactics to increase awareness of Asheville as a group destination, expand the client base and ultimately, drive demand for overnight lodging. The anticipated increase in hotel inventory requires concentrated efforts on building the sales pipeline across all markets and vigilance in assessing where assets are best allocated to reap the strongest returns. A blend of tried and true as well as innovative sales techniques is required to create a competitive edge moving forward.

In early 2018, we restructured the sales markets incorporating two key changes. The first was to assign a sales manager to focus exclusively on North Carolina, Asheville's strongest core market. The second was to combine what was previously two markets (northeast and mid-Atlantic) into one market territory, with efforts concentrated in Chicago and Washington, D.C. We expect the realignment of markets to drive more leads for our community. The 2018-2019 fiscal year blends traditional sales activities like sales calls, tradeshow and marketplace attendance, hosting in-market events, well-placed regional and national sponsorships and advertising with innovative activities such as pop-up client events and exclusively Asheville webinars—all with the goal of adding new acquisition accounts. A central piece of the plan is bringing buyers to Asheville to experience the destination either during an Asheville 48 Hour Experience or on an independent site visit.

Major initiatives targeted for the next 12 months include identification/prospecting of large sports opportunities able to place events in Asheville during soft periods, hosting two Asheville 48 Hour Experiences and launching an inaugural webinar curated by the CVB exploring Asheville as a meeting destination and targeting planners wanting to learn more.

KEY STRATEGIES

- Research and secure well-placed regional and national sponsorship opportunities with the aim of placing Asheville in a new and wider consideration set
- Concentrate sales resources in North Carolina and key regional cities of Atlanta, Greenville, Columbia, Jacksonville, East Tennessee, Nashville, Chicago and Washington, D.C.
- Work with Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Association to identify/pursue events of 500+ for the off-peak and SS-Thursday periods
- Expand the client base using traditional sales methods and employing emerging opportunities unveiled through data research and analysis

Increase Client Engagement through Target Market Sales Visits and Client Events

- Host three client events in key cities of Washington, D.C., Atlanta and Chicago
- Host pop-up events in tandem with attendance at major industry shows – National Tour Association, American Bus Association, IMEX, Association Executives of North Carolina
- Execute regular sales trips to core markets and targeted regional cities
- Attend 27 regional, national, internationally focused trade shows and missions crossing all market segments (see Partner Opportunities as listed on Asheville CVB.com)
- Utilize the *Have More Fun on Us* meeting development fund targeting contracted Sunday-Thursday group stays with a special emphasis on January-April business

Host Buyers to Experience the Asheville Product

- Execute two Asheville 48 Hour Experience events – November 2018 and March 2019 with a target audience of 12 buyers
- Push individual site visits, understanding conversion rates increases once planners visit
- Host sports rights holders as opportunities arise
- Support independent FAMs and site visits hosted by industry partners
- Participate in international group and individual FAMs spearheaded by Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina

Support the Sales Process

- Identify sponsorship opportunities for the current and next fiscal years with organizations having a regional and national-level impact in the meetings market
- Use external lead-generating vendors to qualify meeting prospects with a specific focus on corporate buyers
- Maintain an expanded destination presence on Cvent and respond aggressively to leads received through this channel
- Promote extensively the *Have More Fun On Us* meetings incentive program for booking sourced through the CVB targeting soft periods and Sunday through Thursday stays using targeted mailings, Facebook advertising, LinkedIn messaging and web content

- Apply a web content personalization tool (Bound) to promote the Meeting Planner Guide to first-time visitors to the website and thereby, capture contact information for further prospecting

Develop TEAM ASHEVILLE and Regional Partnerships

- Encourage industry partners to join the CVB at trade and client events
- Participate with the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina and regional tourism bureaus on international and group tour marketing initiatives
- Include partnership opportunities on AshevilleCVB.com and in Partner Connect e-newsletter
- Host quarterly directors of sales meetings and twice-annual Citywide Task Force meetings to exchange information and update partners on current/future sales initiatives
- Identify and create community connections with partner organizations/members to promote bringing professional associations to Asheville to meet

Raise Awareness and Knowledge of the Area Among Southeast AAA Branch Offices

- Continue quarterly web-based destination orientation/training programs focusing on niche and seasonal marketing content
- Attend AAA Superbowl of Knowledge, the annual training event for AAA Carolinas
- Participate in the annual Blue Ridge Parkway AAA FAM
- Host in-market FAMs for select AAA clubs

COMMUNICATIONS AND CONVENTIONS SERVICING OUTLOOK

Client communication is a key component of the department's strategy. With a robust communication plan in place, the CVB will be in touch with planners throughout the year, capturing their attention when they are in the destination discovery phase---the most critical connection time with a CVB. Tools used will include e-newsletters, pre- and post- tradeshow and marketplace communications, creative RFP contests and incentives, seasonal correspondence, targeted niche mailings and more. The team will use available research and, through the "warm leads" efforts will further refine and target those planners leaving a digital breadcrumb trail indicating interest in Asheville.

In addition, the convention services team will continue to support the CVB sales managers' efforts and enhance the meeting planner and attendee experience through exceptional customer service, knowledge of local resources and by providing creative services. Focus will continue to be on offering marketing assistance to help planners build the meeting's attendance through materials that raise awareness of Asheville's attributes to potential meeting attendees

CONVENTIONS SERVICING STRATEGIES & TACTICS

Enhance marketing toolkit for meeting planners, continue to help as many meetings as possible and leverage the connection to the client to help generate future leads and content for sales communications.

- Provide services to inbound groups hosting events in Asheville
- Promote and distribute the CVB's attendance building video
- Collect testimonials and meeting details from meeting planner clients for media leads.

Assist as many meetings as possible and leverage the connection to the client to help generate future leads.

- Provide services to inbound groups hosting events in Asheville
- Develop new post-meeting survey communication strategy to ensure contact is maintained to increase future bookings
- Focus on meeting promotion needs to encourage and increase the Asheville meeting's attendance
- Develop convention service web tools for meeting promotion including image gallery, promotional text download and video links

KEY STRATEGIES

- Expand placement of the print and digital advertisement used in promoting Asheville
- Continue direct marketing programs, including lead generation promotions offering creative incentives for sending RFPs
- Develop LinkedIn marketing strategy to including development of an Asheville meetings brand company page, targeted advertisements, and content sharing / client engagement by sales staff.
- Monitor web traffic and performance, and work with web manager to optimize meeting planner pages specifically monitoring performance of Submit RFP page
- Develop website personalization strategy to deliver content to first-time and return visitors with the goal of capturing more prospect data and RFP submissions
- Continue to partner with the PR team to pitch publications in the group market and respond to media inquiries maintaining our reputation as an exceptional partner to journalists and editors
- Improve sports content on ExploreAsheville.com to promote Asheville as a sports destination
- Continue to add new editorial content for meeting planner section to expand awareness of Asheville's assets
- Use Twitter and LinkedIn to promote our attendance at industry events
Use targeted Facebook and LinkedIn advertising to build awareness of the destination and planner promotions